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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002424

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: RIVAL SUNNI POLITICOS MANUEVERING FOR PLACE IN CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING

REF: BAGHDAD 2413

Classified By: A/PolCouns Henry S. Ensher for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary. Rival Sunni politicians made clear in June 7 conversations that there is continuing progress in enlarging the Constitutional Drafting Committee by adding Sunni representatives. Some contacts suggested that one Sunni faction, the National Dialogue Council, enjoys the favor of the Sunni Deputy Chair of the Committee organizer of the effort, Adnan Janabi. Committee Chair Hammudi warned us about a Dialogue-dominated Sunni faction, reflecting possible worry for the legitimacy of the process and the potential strengthening of a rival to his own Shia group. End Summary.

2. (C) Dr. Ayad Samarra'i of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) described to Poloff June 7 current efforts to enlarge the Constitutional Drafting Committee. He identified three main issues that require clarification. Aside from the number of Sunnis to be added to the Committee, Samarra'i said his greatest concern was the method of choosing the Sunni delegates. He complained the mechanism for selection was not transparent and suggested that Committee Deputy Chair Adnan Janabi was too close to the National Dialogue Council. He also claimed the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Hamam al Hammudi "did not want to see a lot of National Dialogue people on the committee.

3. (C) Samarra'i reiterated that the IIP had attempted -- in good faith -- to bring in other Sunni groups. (He cited as proof his party's ongoing discussions with other political figures beyond the usual triumvirate of IIP, Muslim Ulema Council (MUC) and Sunni Waqf (Endowment), mentioning Sunni secularist Nasir Chardarchi and Communist Party leader Hamid Majid Mussa. While MUC leader, Harith al Dhari, does not want to join the process, Samarra'i claimed others in the organization are willing. The best way forward, he proposed, is to gather all the various Sunni factions into one room (including those who were not present at the meeting convened by Janabi on June 2), to debate the professional merits of all candidates and choose.

4. (C) Sunni secular political party leaders Hatem Mukhlis was also generally positive in his June 7 discussion with Poloff about the progress in achieving Sunni participation in the constitution drafting. He said the ruling Shia coalition had become more flexible after the Secretary's visit. Mukhlis has also submitted lists of potential committee members to Janabi, but he also said Janabi favors National Dialogue. Mukhlis said specifically that 10 attendees, out of 56, at Janabi's June 2 meeting of Sunni leaders had been from the National Dialogue Council. Samarra'i had cited the same numbers and noted that the IIP, MUC and the Waqif had only one representative each.

5. (C) Dr. Saleh Mutlak, Spokesman for the National Dialogue generated the most enthusiasm and confidence to Poloff on June 7. He referred to various conferences in the Sunni triangle that would help select nominees, including a June 11 effort in Diyala, an event in Anbar the week of June 12 and perhaps a conference in Mosul. Mutlak, signaling the National Dialogue's position in the catbird seat, suggested the groups own candidates need not even serve on the committee. He boasted the Dialogue is so flexible and open they would support the nominees of other factions, if they were professionally qualified.

6. (C) Comment. That Mutlak expresses such generosity about the possibility of non-National Dialogue on the Committee lends credence to his rivals' suspicions that the National Dialogue has a deal with Janabi. Committee Chair Hammudi also expressed worry to Poloff in a separate June 7 discussion about members of that group dominating Sunni representation on the Committee. His stated

concern was that the Dialogue was planning to stage a dramatic withdrawal from the process at its end to strengthen itself in Sunni politics, while casting doubt on the legitimacy of the whole process. Hammudi did not say he would interfere in Janabi's inclusion efforts, but wanted to signal us that the process would not be served by the domination of a particular Sunni faction. A more united Sunni group would also be a stronger voice against specifically Shia interests, something that may be in Hammudi's mind as well.

17. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.

Jeffrey